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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1285

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY

RUMIAAA/US SOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/COMSOC SOUTH PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/CDR JTF-BRAVO PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 001268

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: COUNTER-NARCOTICS CHIEF ASSASSINATED

¶1. (U) Summary: Retired General Julian Aristides Gonzales Irias, Director of the National Directorate of Counter-Narcotics (DLCN), was shot to death in his vehicle shortly before 07:00 local time on December 8 in Tegucigalpa.

The assailants were two pairs of armed men, each pair on a motorcycle, who ambushed Gonzales while he was en route from his daughter's school to pick up his security detail. The attack appears to be drug-related, with no connection to the current Honduran political crisis. Gonzales was well and favorably known to numerous offices and agencies within the Embassy. End summary.

¶2. (U) The attack took place shortly after Gonzales had dropped off his daughter at school, while en route to pick up his regular security detail. Police contacts informed Embassy that Gonzales regularly took his daughter to school without his security detail, following the same route every day, contrary to force protection guidance. Before 07:00 local time, as Gonzales was passing through the Guanacaste neighborhood of Tegucigalpa, approximately six blocks northwest of the Embassy, two motorcycles, each with two men on board, came alongside Gonzales' SUV and fired five shots into the vehicle, killing Gonzales. Police sources informed Embassy that they do not believe there was a political motivation for the attack, but rather that it was connected to Gonzales' anti-narcotics role. (Note: Honduras is a major through-point for illicit narcotics trafficking and is on track to have a homicide rate of over 60 per 100,000 population in 2009, one of the highest in the world, much of it related to narco-trafficking and organized crime. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Gonzales had been Director of the DLCN, a police force under the command of the Attorney General within the Public Ministry, since 2003, and was well and favorably known to many offices and agencies in the Embassy. At the invitation of the Embassy, Gonzales attended the June presentation of four high-speed interceptor boats to the Honduran armed forces shortly before the June 28 coup d'etat.

He was seen by the Embassy as an effective partner in the anti-narcotics effort.

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